The Voice of the Pine

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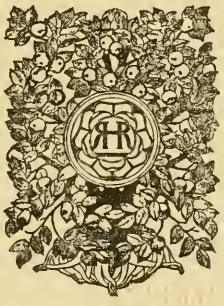
The Voice of the Pine

THE VOICE OF THE PINE

By

CHARLES AUGUSTUS SCHUMACHER



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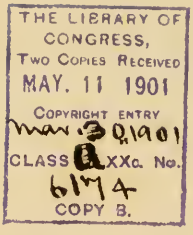

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CHARLES AUGUSTUS SCHUMACHER

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Dedication

There is a pine—how my heart knows where!—
With hair all tangled by the careless years,
That came a hundred gay and found it there,
And laughing so had missed its heart of tears.

I chanced that way, nor dreamed it sacred spot,
But when a voice came forth and spoke to me,
A wonder grew; and yet the years heard not,
Though they had passed that way for a century.

And shall I tell you what it said to me?
Only this: Glory lingers in the West,
Though sun is gone, and sky bends close to sea
Forevermore; and silence is the rest.

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WITH THEE!

EART of the wandering breeze,
Could I teach my fingers call
A music from the trees,
Like distant waters' fall,
I would with thee, with thee!

Soul of the restless sea,
Could I feel my breast but heave,
As though God spoke to me,
I never more could grieve,
But be with thee, with thee!

Spirit beyond the sun,
When the silence folds in peace
And length of days is done,
How life shall still increase,
At last with thee, with thee!

FROM THE VALLEY

ILLS, with your wooded crests,
Where the silence rests,
And the drifted snows shine through,
My soul climbs up to you.

WAITING

HEN I awoke and found it day,
Could I be sad?
Over the fields a little way,
A step or two where trees are tall,
Then hand shall wave so fairy small,
And O so low a voice shall call—
Then, heart, be glad!

SPRING

NCE the winds were sighing,
Woods and fields replying:
Sunbeams came—
Hearts of flame—
And whispered things
That water sings—
But who shall name!

Blossoms hushed and listened,
Eyes saw out and glistened—
And they heard
Every word,
And lived so true,
And so would you,
If you had heard.

SUMMER

RE those fields Elysian
Fairer, full in vision,
Than are these?
Are there trees
Some other-where
That lift in air
Such majesties?

How the clouds go sailing,
Silver wings availing
Through and through
Endless blue,
And magic nights
With moon's long lights
Make world anew!

AUTUMN

OODS are browed with wonder,
Sunsets linger under
All the sky—
Soon are by—
And the gold is still
To the wind's own will
When sunsets die.

Wail and woe are waking,
Shoreless seas are breaking
Over all;
Shadows tall
Blind every star,
And help is far,
Though voices call.

WINTER

OICES low were hymning,
When the twilight, dimming,
Changed to dark;
Never lark
Made song so fair—
Came stealing care—
And O I hark!

Stars are very tender,
Moon is calm with splendor
And delight:
But the night
Is drear and long,
And far is song,
Far morning's light.

MORNING

ONDER on the mountains,
Fair the rainbow fountains
Of the day
Leap and play,
So wondrously;
And on the lea
Lies silver spray.

All the flame is bright'ning—
What a dazzling lightning—
Now the sun!
Splendor none,
In dreams, like this,
And then the bliss
That night is done!

NOON

REES have ceased their swaying,
Winds are gone a-Maying;
Birds asleep
Silence keep,
And dream when song
Their hearts shall throng,
As waves the deep.

Soon shall be their waking,
Shadows cool forsaking
For the sky;
Up and high
Away they'll wing,
Such raptures fling
That never die.

NIGHT

EST is all a splendor!
Crimsons deep and tender
Gleam and glow,
Changing so,
In flame like fire,
And wild desire,
Now soft and low.

Clouds with gray are blended—
Is the glory ended?—
Lo, a star!
Star on star,
And all the blue
Is born anew,
Nor heaven far!

SEA

UNSHINE-CROWNED, snow-crested,
Wonder-waves, unrested,
Laugh and leap,
Surge and sweep,
And fill my soul,
And make me whole,
Here with the deep.

Wind-swept, hoar, and soundless,
Ancient, grave, and boundless,
O thou sea,
Ever be
As near as now,
And guard the vow
That chastens me!

THE SEA'S SECRET

NCE I wandered questless,
Sped, and worn, and restless,
O'er the strand—
There in sand,
Where ocean rolls,
Were ancient scrolls,
Unwrit of hand.

Low I bowed me, dreaming,
Till the sea-birds, screaming,
Waked the sea;
Wild and free
It loosed its might,
Made wild the night,
Then laughed at me.

MOUNTAINS

REAT, wide, pine-voiced ranges,
Where the shadow changes
Dark to blue—
Once with you,
Who could forget,
When sun is set,
That something new!

When the lightning flashes,
And the thunder crashes
Overhead,
Tempest-wed
Stand you, grand, calm—
Still hymning psalm
When storm is sped.

MOON

HERE the pines make cresting,
And a place of resting,
As for prayer,
Stars are there,
And other light—
So magic white,
And wondrous fair.

Fair as sail that gleameth
When the sun's white streameth
Out of noon,
Cometh soon—
(And could it stay,
As now, alway!)—
The great, wide moon!

MUSIC

ITHER cometh stealing,
Closer than close feeling,
Wonder thing,
Like the spring—
Some dream of yore—
Love evermore—
Earth vanishing!

Ah, no! vanished gladness,
Soul is waked to sadness;
Gone the fears,
Gone in tears—
That I might *live!*
Far, fair THOU, give
Me other years!

THE OPEN GRATE

ERRY flames up-flowing,
All fine fancies glowing,
Peace untold!
There, behold!
The crimson bends,
Finds light and ends,
And now is gold.

Only faintest flashes—
Stained and crumbling ashes—
Out and chill!
Memory still
Dreams on the dreams—
Close some one seems—
Must wait until—!

MAY-TIME

HEN the morn was hushing,
Something, like the rushing
As of seas—
Melodies—
Swept o'er the world,
And Life, dew-pearled,
Stirred on the leas.

Crimson snows were resting
Over song and nesting,
Skies were near,
And the Year
Waked with a start,
Throbbed wild of heart—
For May was here!

ARBUTUS

RE the world is knowing
Where are roses blowing,
Ere the May
Drifts the spray
Of blossoms fair
A-whirl in air,
O'er hills, away!

Virgin snows a-drifting,
Sunlit clouds a-rifting,
Are not white,—
And the light
Is not so dear,—
As something here
Breaks on the sight.

THE MORNING STAR

ONDROUS in thy beaming,
Fairer than all dreaming,
Thou art fair;
And if prayer
Could make thee stay,
Long would I pray—
O linger there!

When life's night is lifting,
And the stars are drifting
Far away,
When the day
Breaks full and strong,
Shall I thus long
For night to stay?

INSPIRATION

THE west is cold with gold,
And fading into gray;
The work is done
For toiling sun,
And ended is the day.

The hills are still and chill,
In ages clad and might;
The river's song
Drifts along
And mingles with the night.

The winds are lone and moan,
And leafless every tree;
The world is far
As yonder star—
No voices come to me.

And I am glad and sad,
Alone with earth and sky;
A new rare gleam
Of wide life's dream
Trembles there on high.

A thing divine and mine,
Unfolding to my sight;
A peace and prayer
And spirits' care,
A light inflaming night!

THE LAKE

INDLESSLY, wavelessly sleeping,
How happy thou, fair lake!
Never, never knowing
The sorrow of hearts that break.

Peacefully on thy bosom
The fragrant lilies lie;
I gathered for my love
As we were drifting by.

To pluck the whitest, fairest,
Once again I came;
In her hair I twined them—
And life is not the same.

Never missing thy lilies,
How happy thou, calm lake:
From thy silent slumbers
Never, never wake!

MY GARDEN

N yonder eastward hill my garden blooms;
There roses blush,
And winds now hush,
And beauty tarries nigh
To save what else would die;
While downy mist of trees up-looms
Athwart a hazy sky.

I have not labored there nor cared for it;
When June was prime,
In summer-time,
Where waves lap on the shore
I mused, nor longed for more;
But now apart, alone, and far I sit,
And gaze my garden o'er.

The roses blooming there are June's, but time
Has filched from spring,
And now must fling
Them far and wantonly
O'er grass and field and tree:
But fairest are, O faith sublime!
In my garden free.

It seemeth yesterday that naught was there;
To-day the new
Enchants my view;
Though morrow too shall come,
And all my garden dumb
With old year's age shall stand but bare,
I know new year will come.

When late and autumned age shall come to me,
Before life's snows,
May some fair rose,
Saved from my youth's own prime,
Bring back my summer time,
And morrow merge in memory,
And faith still hold sublime!

AT REST

GÈD and weary of life!
As lonely as sea isles,
As sadly as death smiles
Over the morning of life,
He dwelled apart,
Worn, sad of heart,
Weary of life.

Loved ones were calling him home!
As softly as winds sigh,
As stilly as birds fly,
Deeps then were wooing him home;
And happy he
In melody,
Wafting him home.

Long had he sighed for No-more!
As slowly as tides flow,
As calmly as rainbow
Fades into cloud mist once more,
In fulness deep,
In calmest sleep,
Came the No-more.

COMMUNION

HERE'S a silence of the sea
That comforts me,
When the wind 's asleep
Upon the deep.

There's a stillness in the night,
When stars are bright,
That is more than words
And song of birds.

There's a calm of perfect rest,
That I love best,—
When the Spirit stirs
Pure worshippers!

WHEN BY NIGHT THE SHEPHERDS WATCHED

N the golden days of old, out of perfect blue,
Where by night the shepherds watched when
their lives were true,
A star was born, and guided them
Over the plains to Bethlehem.

There the wondering shepherds saw One with glory
crowned,
Fairer than the lilies fair, calm as seas profound,
And such a joy came unto them
Under the stars in Bethlehem!

Should it ever come to us, star in night's blue sky,
Star that guided them, we would never wonder why
A joy seemed like a voice to them
That watched by night near Bethlehem!

THE DAYS AFTER

HE ripples seemed a-calling,
The sun was up,
And rosy beams were falling
In a lily's cup.

The white and gold I plundered,
And scattered free,
By waves so soon were sundered,
Drifting out to sea.

The lily's fair adorning,
All gone from me;
But the fragrance and the morning
Cling, still cling to me!

SUGGESTIVENESS

T the ending of the day,
When the last and richest ray
Of the sunset fades away
Into the night,
There softly come to me
Dreams, the fairest and the rarest,
Of that world-old mystery—
The life beyond the sea.

'Mid the silence of the graves,
In the moaning of the waves,
When the wind so fiercely raves
Along the shore,
There blend in harmony
Sounds, the sweetest and the deepest,
Of a soul-warm melody
From far across the sea.

In the kisses of a child,
When the memory is beguiled
By its love thoughts into mild
Forgetfulness,
There flit so stilly by
Forms, the truest and the purest,
Who know all the mystery
Beyond the silent sea!

CHILDHOOD

OW often in the early days,
And happy days,
That were as fair as chastened
Whiteness of the purest foam,
I have hurried, swiftly hastened,
O'er the meadows, through the shadows
And the darkness of the night,
To that ever welcome light,
Star-like beaming, brightly gleaming
In the window of my home.

When southland winds came sighing low,
And all the snow
Was fading into flowers;
When the spring smiled on the lea,
And the birds sang through the hours,
O how quaintly and how faintly
Murmured then the streams to me
As they ran on gleefully
With such tripling haste, fast rippling
To the great heart of the sea!

Then life was joy, and dream, and song;
Nor deep nor long
Was its remembered sorrow:
Death seemed closing of the eyes
That would open on the morrow—
Not a feeling one was stealing
Softly onward where strong love
Ne'er can follow, far above
To supernal peace eternal
In the silence of the skies.

BABY'S KISS

NTWINE those close warm arms of thine,
And kiss no more, my babe, for mother's heart
To-night is weary of this dreary life:
For other lips than thine I feel on mine,
And I would fain forget this cheerless strife.
Thou close thine eyes and when the blushes start
Along the hills and morning thrills
With music of the seaward streams,
Then kiss deep slumber from my dreams."

Beyond the circle of the night,
Beyond the lonely haunts of deepest star,
Calm sleep comes swiftly musing down and rests,
As gently as the last low fading light
Of evening bends the wooded mountain crests,
Upon those baby lids that softer are
Than rose's lip and lily's tip,
And fragrant murmurs of the air
Sweetly pillow that moon-bathed hair.

"How soon asleep when life is all
A-blossom, and the moon will leave the sky
To whisper fairy worlds like that! But I—
That he would come from out the shadows tall,
No cold close earth about him, heaven high
Upon his brow, and love that cannot die,
And I could rest upon his breast,
Enfolded in his arms as sea
Enfolds her isles eternally!"

Wake, mother, wake! The day-crowned sun
Has long stood at the casement, low and vined,
To give the greeting baby promised thee;
The noiseless stars were fading one by one,
Those lips were close on thine, the arms entwined
Thy brow, when snowy wings swept o'er the sea,
And yet were strong, though journeyed long,
Far brighter too than dawn's deep bars,
And baby faded with the stars.

FAME

HEN night was crowned with stars, a vision came
To One in prayer, and lifted up his soul;
In after-time a Seeker found a scroll,
And love was there, and glory, but no name.

OLD LOVE-LETTERS

HERE came to me in ancient heritage,
From those that loved it, a golden lute
Which evermore is still
Beside the missal and a faded flower.

One golden hour,
When stars were drifting over hill,
And bird and broken flute
Were hushed in night, as though a Mage
Were calling came a golden face,
Brow-swathed in golden hair,
And bowed above the lute, and seemed in prayer;
Then hand leaped up and smote the strings,
And music, flushing as the day flings
Fires in the dawn, rose, and the grace
Of song was blended in, until it seemed as peace.

And then I saw one standing rapt,
As though the seas lapped
At his feet, and all his gaze was over seas;
A light from heaven was on his brow,
His lips were framing vow
To fold round her through God's eternities
Love's endless peace.

Times enough unrest possesses me,
And yearning for those heaven-things
The soul makes haven for; and then
I think to lay my hand along the strings
And loose the voice and make it free
To sing to me of peace.

But should I waken once again
Some melody that waits
Within the silence there, it would not be the song
That passed from heaven's gates,
Slipped o'er the bar,
And murmured as a sea,
And made them glad so long
Ago—for they are far,
And only lute remains with me.

So evermore the golden lute is still
Beside the missal and a faded flower.

GOD

HEN life had lost its charm and light,
And the soft, far song of the skyey lark
Had faded in the hollow night,
A hand had touched me in the dark.

It seemed as new as the thrill of love,
As long as endless last good-bye,
As deep as the gloomy sky above—
And then I knew it was God and I.

THE WOMAN OF MY DREAMS

HE was so fair, the woman of my dreams,
So fair the stars would tangle in her hair,
And moonbeams all astray from over streams
Would ripple on her lips contented there.

But when she went away she went so far,
And all the light went drifting from the hill,
And nevermore seems fair the Evening Star,
And nevermore a kiss when lips are still.

DAY DREAMS

FTEN when I'm dreaming,
Strangely seeming
Near the lonely haunts of Poesy,
I deeply long to whisper—
Only whisper—
Half the nameless ecstasy
That is so much like heaven to me.

Then a music, thrilling
Like the trilling
Of a leaf-embowered bird, sweeps o'er
Me, leaving rare confusions,
Sweet illusions,
In my soul of something more
Like life than I have lived before.

Visions, pure and holy,
Rising slowly
With a beauty of unnumbered years,
Come bringing boundless measure
Of deep pleasure,
Till fade sea and land and fears,
With naught left me of earth but tears.

ONWARD

ONDER on the mountains, night
Upriseth dark and still:
Yet, deeper in the west,
Beyond the summit pines that thrill
With mem'ries of the spray's kiss,
And the day's bliss,
There remaineth warm, fair light.

Wooing gurgling melody
From foam-wreathed rocks, the stream
Runs wildly on. No rest
Awaits it; but a richer gleam
Shall ever flash and quiver
O'er the river,
Growing softer near the sea.

Youth, uncertain, stands where ways
Divide, hears voices sweet,
Far-mingled. When the quest
Is ending and the shadows fleet
Move eastward, age, all tearless,
Calm and fearless,
Finds one meaning in the days.

Onward, ever onward, are
Increasing beauties. Life,
Rose-like, unfolds, and best
Of joy, e'en after long, strong strife,
Outruns our clasping fingers,
And yet lingers,
Sweetly calling from afar.

THE QUEST

TWILIGHT, art thou never weary, ever
Longing for the day that goes,
Swift, fair, before thee? How it wooes thee on!
What worlds of beauty oft it crowds
On mountain brows, and in the clouds
Breathes crimsons deeper than the rose—
Calling, softly calling thee, and then is gone!

I, too, have felt such burning anguish, yearning
Long for soul-truth, seeking far
Along the shore among the shells that blush
Sea-secrets, list'ning 'neath the pines
When falling snow about them twines
A voiceless grandeur and a hush—
Catching but a gleam like that when star greets star.

Yet surely life is rarer, visions fairer
For all noble striving; we
Become like that we seek at last, and cease
To strive; a calm then as of streams,
Wrapt in their strange, still winter dreams,
Shall fill us, and—deep mystery—
Truth shall claim her own in purity and peace.

MINE

OU see that woman standing yonder, eyes
As high as love can reach? The world's one heart
Is there, and she's my own. You smile and rise:
Just sit and let me draw her with my art.

You see no rose and lily in her face,
And youth is gone, and there's a silver gray;
The queenly lines that give a maiden grace
Are lost in womanhood: the curve 's away.

Now, nature loves her curves, and ever rounds
Her beauty thus: the absence argues lack,—
Among the rocks of mountain gold abounds,
And from its crags a voice may echo back.

Those fleecy clouds that sweep before the wind,
Observed more closely, show beneath a bank
Of heavy clouds not moving: far behind
The blue remains—morns dawning rank on rank.

These ripples, curve succeeding curve, belie
The current's course, which never heeds the blast;
They trip a pleasing measure, soon are by,
But it flows on and finds the sea at last.

My trend is clear; my subjects serve my end:
The surface never is the heart. We know
A wondrous something deep within our friend
That's finer than the touch of things and show.

There, see! She bends her brow on me! That white
  Is rare, and full of soul, and grows on you;
As in the clouds there glows a softened light,
  And deepens till the deep-browed moon 's in view.

Ah! You have caught the charm, the spirit's spell,
  That's larger than the life? Love's greatness lies
In strength to wait love's fullness; it is well:
  Nor haste nor prayers avail much. Shall we rise?

ONCE

HEART once beat for me,
So fond and free;
And hands once smoothed my brow,
Not now, not now!

A voice spake soft and low,
And moved me so,
When life was rich and new,
And love was true.

Then music filled my days,
And work was praise—
O could it come again,
As then, as then!

ROBIN'S SONG

MY heart was glad all yesterday,
And flown my brooding care,
And I was ever far away:
For suddenly from air
Sang robin merrily
The year's first song for me.

The snows no more lay on the hills,
The winds were fair and free,
Awake the music of the rills,
And low a distant sea
Sighed through an orchard lawn,
Where light glowed like the dawn.

For there beneath the blossoms fair—
The white I love so much—
A voice was low beyond compare,
And soft as air a touch—
Sweet memories are long,
And sweet is robin's song!

OVER SEAS

HEN last I saw the moon,
With face so fair and all of gold,
'Twas not where Avon's youth grows old
I saw the moon.

But far beyond the seas,
Along the hills that crown a lake,
I waited for its light to break,
Beyond the seas.

And when it came at last—
A glory flooding through the trees—
I had no thought of over seas,
When it came at last.

BUT YESTERDAY

EMPTY a wayside nest,
Its old-time song is still;
But winds they never rest,
And merry is the rill.

Only a scrolless stone,
A bush where roses blush;
Though winds should sometimes moan,
The rill will never hush.

Folded and calm the hands,
And just a moment gone;
The east is girt with bands,
And day is all at dawn.

Ever to leave the old,
And journey to the new;
To vanish through the gold,
And then beyond the blue.

Perfect the law, I deemed,
For man must die to be—
But broken all I dreamed,
When death had come to me!

TO-MORROW

I

HE golden day is ending,
And gracious dews descending,
Soul, for thee;
Thou shalt be
So soon alone,
Where waves make moan
O'er glooming sea.

The last sweet hour is flying,
And voices low are dying
Into night;
Far is flight
When thou set'st sail—
Nor prayers avail,
Ere dawning light.

II

Think you I'm forgetting—
Now that sun is setting—
Seas divide,
Worlds beside—
Forgetting now
When moon's great brow
Lifts on the tide?

Think you I'm not feeling—
With the stars revealing
Heaven's blue—
Feeling you,
Where'er you are,
Whatever star
Breathes down on you?

III

Still the tides go flowing—
But my heart is knowing
Worlds away
One may pray,
And sleep in prayer,
To waken *there!*
At break of day.

LIFE

A MELLOW Instrument, and Master-willed,
Once waked as from a dream, made music low
And sweet, until a Hand, in evening's glow,
Was laid along the strings, and all was stilled.

SORROW

ONE Golden Day, when birds were on the wing,
A Wind arose and laid the Glory bare;
And One raised eyes, and saw not anywhere
A sign that Earth should waken with the Spring.

DEATH

N Ancient Ocean lapped along the shore,
And Pilgrim, seeking shrine across the seas,
Came down and stood, and dreamed of
mysteries,
And sailed away, and came again no more.

LOVE

FTER the flush of sunset came a star
And fashioned in the blue a glory there,
And all adown the night and everywhere
Were stars and glory, and God enthroned afar.

BEYOND

ABOVE the hills such mornings rose and nights,
And in the valley One with burdens bowed
Took heart and climbed the heights the crimsons browed,
And, wearied so, saw yet beyond more lights.

MY CHIEF MUSICIAN

TRAINS of music swelling,
And the tears will start;
Like sea's fountains welling,
Tides rise in my heart.

Earth and heaven are stealing
Blended over me—
O there 's no revealing
Music's mystery!

So the stars seem yearning
To tell world mysteries—
Silent they are burning
Over silent seas.

Two Evenings

TWO EVENINGS

IS night; rich, wondrous night that thrills with light;
A matchless beauty runs before the sight;
The stars suspend a fairy arch of dreams,
And all the world 's at rest; the bright-eyed streams,
That trip and slip along their pebbled way,
Serenely gleam, and mirror heaven now;
Along their willowed margin shadows play,
Coquet in mystic shape of leaf and bough,
Till e'en the wind in joy is caught,
And merry days of yore come surging back unsought.

Among the great still clouds that grandly lie
All silver-white along the bending sky—
So children wonder why they never fall—
The full-browed moon appears, o'er-silvers all,
Across the azure deep benignly beams,
And seems to lean a little nearer earth
To give some warning ere the morning streams
Across the world that wakes to new day's mirth;
A face to love and worship long
It bends above the flooding heart that breaks in song.

The winging birds have never sighed nor stirred,
Their sunset song of praise no longer heard—
That warm up-leaping joy that fills the breast
For newer life that ever crowns the nest—
Since maiden-blushing, lightly-stepping Day
Untwined her hair and sank to songless sleep.
Faint wooing murmurs come from far away,
In swaying melody her safely keep,

Nor knows she of the morrow's lot,
For waking now is done, and changing scenes forgot.

Long years before, between two sister trees,—
Now old and weary of the wanton breeze,
And ever bending lower o'er the stream
To find their old companionship and dream
Of days gone by and know again the grace
Of youth,—forgotten hands had shaped a bank
For roses and a bower and trysting place,
Where gracious love bloomed forth from friendship frank,
Where troth was plighted, and the bliss
Of heaven-dwelling souls was compassed by a kiss.

Stern, prayer-unheeding time, that slowly moves
When wingèd haste were merciful, and proves
As swift as destiny when joy appeals
For moment-pausing, very kindly deals
With lovers' haunts, and weaves a magic spell
Of memories, and half-forgotten sighs,
And golden hopes, around that mossy dell
Where lovers' feet in rhythm ever rise
Along love's mystic way, which bends
And trends so beautiful, and in the sunset ends.

The restless whirl of changing hope and fear
Has aged the world, and given to its sere
Maturity a deeper-silvered brow;
Once rounded tear-wet mounds are levelled now
To dry and even earth again, and seem
None richer for their long-committed trust;
In brightest June the marble's midday gleam
Bestows on honored life no tribute just,—
Not half its due,—and waiteth still
To mix its moss-grown secret with the laughing rill.

All, all is changing, changed, save this one place,
Which as it was remains, with just a trace
Of peace and sadness mingled deep and still;
The falling leaves that die, and new life's thrill,
In endless progress, ever come and go,
And touch it lightly; strongly those departed
Must yet remember mellow eyes aglow,
And bending skies, when here strong love up-started
From out some deep eternity,
And breathed upon them breaths of immortality.

This radiant night, from out the sleeping town
A youth and maid come slowly winding down,
In silence, hand in hand; beneath their feet
The sands unclasp and start away and meet
Again when they have passed; the grasses bend,
The dews dislodge, and breaths of meadow land,
Where lilies mingle, fold them to the end
In hush and saintly peace. At last they stand
Within the water's kindly light,
Where yesterdays had wrapped their souls in rare delight.

As quietly as light rests on the hills,
Calmly as sea's heart hushing rippling rills,
These two this ancient bower kindly holds,
Caressing them as all the past unfolds;
Other hours than this, days of perfect bliss,
And one through-pleaded that the life be spared,
And all the nameless hopes to gain, to miss,
Earth forces, heaven gleamings, life that dared,
Make silence heavy on their lips,
While still the river murmurs on, still westward slips.

FIRST EVENING

HERBERT. LUCERNE.

HERBERT.

INE!

LUCERNE.

Your arms around me give me peace;
The circle of the world is not so wide.

HERBERT.

Is this the hand?

LUCERNE.

Your kiss is on it still.

HERBERT.

Remember you how leaves were turning then,
Those few of perfect crimson 'mid the green,
As though a flame were fanned by vagrant winds?
A thrilling joy went throbbing through the world,
And on the gentle river we adrift
Were one with it. Lo, there beyond the bend,
Where pines hymn of the unreturning past,
And winds that come across the seas alight,
Appeared a lily, lone and beautiful,
Among a stretch of lily-leaves that long
Had sought through twilight-gleaming waters light;
Amid those miles of moving leaves one lily,
As pure and chaste as starlight, gleamed and waved.

LUCERNE.

You twined it in my hair.

HERBERT.

A better home
For it than all that waste of autumn waters;
Up-straying through the gold, your hand, with grace
As wonderful as lily's, feeling how
It hung, seemed bending for a kiss. The joy
Of that great day, and you were mine forever!

LUCERNE.

And then that evening on the sea.

HERBERT.

How long
Those bands of blood-red gold remained; they clung
And clung as though they would not die away.
And then came night!

LUCERNE.

The way of it! Those clouds
That crept like ripples up into the sky
And made a sea above like that below;
Their edge seemed for a moment, only one,
A strand of silver sands. Then deep, dark night!

HERBERT.

How deeply ran the darkling waves and strong;
They seemed to feel a trust to keep us safe.
And in the dark unknown that folded down
I felt like lying on their heaving bosom
To learn the secrets of the voiceless deep.

LUCERNE.

E'en silent death seemed not so dread to come
Up-stealing out the sea.

HERBERT.

Howe'er they rose,
We thought life's storms should never carry us
Beyond the harbor of our love.

LUCERNE.

And now—

HERBERT.

How often we have sat together thus.

LUCERNE.

While sweetly weaving dreams and moon's soft charm
Into a happy future, never once
We saw the shadows.

HERBERT.

Love is one with life;
And ours sweeps infinite beyond the shadows,
Resting in God's great light. Its changeless warmth
Enfolds us as the sunshine holds the rose.

LUCERNE.

Why vainly talk beyond the great one thing
That is, whatever else has been or may.
Sad, sad, is parting when the meeting's sure:
But this uncertainty, this life-flamed war
That sorrow waits upon—

HERBERT.

My perfect love,
The bee toils quite the same in youth and age,
All wondrously; and from the bough the bird

Suspends its last nest like the first; the earth,
That mother to a various family,
Uprises from her silent winter couch,
Unskilled to nourish richer life; but we
Work ever better after years and sorrow;
Slow age gives mellowness to instruments
Not more than sorrow chastens us.

LUCERNE.

I fear
The long sad days that keep you far from me
Will make me wish that heaven-exile, Sorrow,
Had over-stepped our earth, and ne'er with man
Found resting place.

HERBERT.

Indeed, not so: the earth
Were heaven else, and souls, full-satisfied,
Would have no wingèd reach beyond the now:
He has not lived that never truly grieved.
'Tis then that something of ourselves,—life, life,—
Creeps in our work which, after we are gone,
Shall live and live. No: death, and fading night,
And then the everlasting morn!

LUCERNE.

Yes, true;
I think I would not keep you if I could.
With pale white face, out-stretching both her arms,
Truth pleads, your Country calls, and you shall go.
But you will leave me something not myself;
And though I stay, my spirit goes with you
And there upon the many-widowed field
Shall be with you in silent company,
Forevermore.

HERBERT.

Much love has made you sad:
A clearness in the waters makes the depth
Deceptive: far seems near; and even so,
When keener life goes pulsing through our veins,
Earth's veil grows thin to half transparency;
We seem to dimly see that other life
Surrounding us of immortality.
Believe me, 'tis a dream that passes soon,
As shadows over wind-kissed, waving meadows.
A moment thus; the next, slow steady life
Comes back.

LUCERNE.

The end I feel is only dream?
You now are mine, but when I come again,
And long for rest, the moon that smiles on me,
That blesses, as to-night, this river's sleep,
In some dark lonely spot the selfsame night,
May bend above you, in your matted hair
Sadly winding its silver fingers—dead!

HERBERT.

Dead! Die! I had not thought of it. This land,
Rich, wide, fair, better than the far-off isles,
I thought God's choice where man should learn man's worth;
In coming ages life should be sublime
And worthy fellowship with all that's best;
'Tis twilight now, but twilight of the dawn.
O I have dreamed of this long days and nights!
I seemed to hear a mystic silent voice
Speak words to me that I should tell the world.
My days should lengthen till my task was done—
But glory waits on truth, and first comes right.
Die—dead! The world is governed well and holds

One upward course, and ever some one steps
Without the shadow, calling "light beyond!"
The sea with many voices, musing earth,
The heavens flashing, chaunt the mighty song
Of work and victory. The best will come.
If I speak not, some higher heart will catch
The melody and beckon grandly up.
The world swings on. Yet all is gained through you.
O you have lifted high my soul with love;
Through you I deeper feel life's fearful worth—

LUCERNE.

I'll seal the rest with kisses, and be brave;
And say, not you, that more than all the world
I'll miss you, long to see you day and night,
And pray with every breath for your return,
While you give all you have to lift the world—
Hark—one—two—

HERBERT.

Midnight. Short, how short the night,
A winged dream—we march at once—

LUCERNE.

My own,
Round thee be kept His everlasting arms!

SECOND EVENING

(Years after.)

LUCERNE.

THIS night again, and like that other night;
The moon and stars the same—they never age:
Only hearts feel the breath of wings when Time
Flits by. And yet it rather seems that night,
No endless years passed by, my hand in his,
My soul so happy, round us peace. O death,
However close our eager fingers lock,
Our arms enfold, the circle last holds thee!
Yet hope was sweet in all the passing years,
And faith grew strong, for God, who keeps the bird
When lightnings seek it in the clouds, kept him.
Then came a time the war was nearly done,
And he was coming home once more to me.
How I remember all those prayerful days!
One, one beyond the rest, stands queenly out:
The morn was fair, and fair the afternoon,
Till heavy clouds arose along the west,
And towered o'er the sun, concealing it.
But just before the night and day touched garments,
Bright through a ragged rent of angry cloud
The sun broke, flooding the earth with golden haze,
And making all one light. How right it seemed
To end a glorious cause triumphantly
With day like that.
All night I dreamed of him:
I saw him coming o'er the meadow dales,
Then wind along a stretch of shaded road,
And stand at last across the river here,

Reaching a hand to me I almost clasped.
And when his voice arose and brake the silence,
More silvery than plash of distant waters,
And calling me the name we chose as best,
I wakened—and they said that he was dead!—
How did I live those days that followed on,
When morn and noon and eve nor arching blue
Were wide enough to shelter him I loved?
I thought, why live when all the world is empty?
Why not go seek him when the tide sets out?
And burdened with the weight of this blind will
I hither fled to ask these ancient trees,
We loved so much and trusted with our hopes,
Were any better way than this one dark—
But they spake not, were still; nor river spake,
Though I descended to the margin's moss,
And waited till the shadows mixed with dew.
And I had lost the pain, had not a light
From out the east flashed through the clouds, and burst
In thousand splendors far adown the west,
And shed a glory where I saw my home
In soft low outlines melt beneath the glow,
Fading over the hills.
I never knew
How I returned that night along the path
Which ne'er should know his footstep as of yore.
Called they who loved me out above that weight
Of voices dim? Came there some mystic hand,
Whose touch was light as air, and led me on?
Or was it life supreme was yet to live,
And heaven's purpose stayed? Whatever way,
I learned some little gracious time was left
For them that loved me, and were old; but soon
They tarried where the way seemed long, and slept;
Love leaping at the finger tips was vain
To keep a little sunshine in their hearts.

And then the water's music rose again,
Across the meadows, surging through the pines,
In waves came lapping at my hillside home.
Why flame my heart on altar now, I thought,
Since they that worshipped here now live in truth.

Why? Growth is overcoming; beauty, too.
Force met, resisted, turned, results in growth:
That solitary tree that's standing yonder
Would once have bowed before the winds that leave
It now with scarce a branch for booty: arm,
Practiced, holds twice the weight it held last month;
The flowers, trees, the mountains, man, e'er rise
Under the weight of gravity; our pledge
Of heaven is upward-reaching, far and long;
'Tis God's high law of growth—through dark to light.
Then heaven! Wondrous change from earth to soul!
Not all at once, let's think, but steady climb;
First, feeling: there are moments when we feel
The higher forces strangely near; friends come,
And straightway glow and tingling find our hearts;
Should darkness grow, still magic is the spell;
Shut close the eyes when fading tones die out;
Deep in the central spheres of harmony
The soul seems drifting on the endless strain,
A vibrant joy. Rare states are these but real
To shadow forth the age's sweep when soul
Shall feel light, beauty, truth, and love, and God.
Then sight shall come to see what once was felt—
Eternal verities in changeless light.
Last, being: one with truth eternally!
All that was long ago. I now am old,
And know the new-returning years conceal
Why we should struggle helpless 'neath the sun,
Who soon must naked step into the dark.
Nor ask I now why live when all is gone:

We somehow live to somewhat serve mankind.
When robin came this year with early sun,
And waked one morn in falling snow, it sang
For summer; roses fade, but bush is calm
In new year's faith; the tree stands bare in winter,
And harks for spring; and peaceful sinks the day,
Though night is near, for morn shall come. All 's faith,
No end! He saw truth—*life is one with love!*
I loved so well, God was forgot; but all,
All vanished, and He remained; so much it cost
To learn what flowers, birds, know—live in God!
The sea, so changing, wanton with the winds,
Now on some rocky coast loud thundering,
Again in ancient numbers breathing low
In music on the shore, is constant, too;
When God's hand beckons up, it waits and hears.
All time fulfills itself. I wait for him
In steadfast peace to know the truth of love;
And should he come some summer night like this,
When moon so kindly bends her gracious brow,
And stand across the river there, and lift
His voice of old, and bid me come to him—
As — — — — Now!

Fulbert

I

VENGEANCE

EGBERT.

ASTER, I have a word I would with thee.

FULBERT.

Speak on.

EGBERT.

They say that Abelard—

FULBERT.

Is wise
Beyond the beardless years of youth, is great,
With fame so wide that men have come from far
To hear him discourse mighty thought.

EGBERT.

Not that—

FULBERT.

Not that! Is it that regal form of his
And stately bearing which the world admires?
I hear that Paris cons his poetry,
And sings his songs.

EGBERT.

(*Aside.*) 'Tis hard to undeceive.
And yet not that—the word I have is worse—

FULBERT.

Worse! I would have it so, in part; the man
That has but spoken—good of him ne'er yet

With lofty aim has launched the shaft of truth.
How say they, Abelard has secret foes?

EGBERT.

My master, speech, that oft confines much truth,
But never all, and never worst nor best,
Is busy now concerning Abelard,
And his unworthy love of Heloise—

FULBERT.

Egbert!

EGBERT.

If silence served, my lips were sealed,
Be sure; my pain is somewhat too—my pain!
Precautions taken timely work best cures.
'Tis not, I think, what Abelard has done,
But what he would: remove him, saving her.

FULBERT.

For years I trusted you, yet you must speak
Dishonor of my house.

EGBERT.

Stay! Lifted hand
Should find its weight too great to raise 'gainst one
Grown gray in service here. Think you the pain
Is all for you? Have I forgotten her
I twice have saved what time the sea was wild;
Forgotten promise made in morning's mist,
To someone dying, round her child to build
Soul-high in battlements his utmost life?

FULBERT.

Good Egbert, cease; I quite forgot your worth;
Such changes unexpected, dreamed much less

Than falling off of summer's heat to cold,
Toppled reason down, overturned the world,
Made foe of friend; forgive, and ravel out
This web of current speech that I may know
Its very heart.

EGBERT.

They say that Abelard,
Whom you have entertained, has cherished long
Unworthy ends from his relations here.
The story runs that he to compass them
Laid under tribute beauty, voice, his fame,
Even philosophy; before the door,
Your hand unbarred, afforded watchless entrance,
He planned and tricked to find his way within;
His object, being near to Heloise.
You thought his wisdom unalloyed with earth,
And proudly made him master of her studies;
While he—but let him speak man's way, no less!
I promised that.

FULBERT.

Why late reveal this danger,
When earlier news had checked its heading so?

EGBERT.

I could believe no stain on wisdom's dome,
Nor virtue weak—but now the trend is clear.

FULBERT.

Long years in service make you true. Go! go!
O Heloise, to this!

II

REVELATION

FULBERT.

(By the river, alone.)

MY only friend! Exceeding rich is life
When man must say of river, that! Out, out!
'Twere better not to be. A niggard thrift
To save myself to learn such truth at last;
Rare wisdom, caring for a candle's light,
And here at hand to snuff it out blind fate!
Life's game when played leaves player wondrous gain,
If mightily he cares for frustrate hopes,
For chances vain, and fortunes never real.
But yesterday how good great God's fair world!
To-day man mars it, God past finding out.
Man?—Death pays death: what other price is left?
Who mars must pay, who pays has balanced all.
What better place than this that life meet death;
For here began, here ends, what I thought life.
My boyish feet made friends with every rush
That sleeps to-night above the river's sleep;
These trees have spread above me arms as now
For near a century; the river yonder
Was ever kind: and out of this there grew
A hope that somewhere waited perfect joy,
Would surely welcome me whene'er I came.
Now, after many days, with end in sight,
A hand arrests, we stop, and never both,
To-morrow over, shall again step forth
Beneath the ancient blessing of these trees.
What is there compensates? There should be life,
And death for death is death. Weighs this with that,

A sudden hurry, flash of swords, hearts still,
With long great sweep of holy solemn days?
River, I scorned a moment hence, yet calm
As though I blessed, we little thought long since,
When days were young and I came down to you,
That some night, bright with gorgeous silver moon,
And quietness like autumn's quietness
Enfolding us, that here my crowning joy,
Life's long far quest, should end so wofully.
The deed man's hand was never fashioned for,
When morrow's sun hangs in the west, is done!
And hence to-night we'll take our long farewell:
Farewell, my youth's young heart's delight, farewell!
And in the endless years you stray this way,
Should you remember me, remember this:
In those far-off times richly I have lived.
From out your silence something came like love,
Which was so splendid when my life began,
So simple now. For then I saw great fields
The mountains sloped to meet, and yonder woods
With winding ways for princely solitude;
And on some rolling hill, midway and fair,
A castle standing, sky and sunshine there,
And love in perfect state within; but now,
Could hand clasp mine and lips frame love's low speech,
'Twere all enough. No mellow sunshine first,
Nor ivy-covered walls night glories in,
Nor sweeping hills midway whose grassy slopes
Are lost in mountains—just heart's fullness now!
When morning's sun arose, this love was mine;
It sets: the love I thought was mine proves his,
Who has not kept it pure and sacredly.
O Heloise, not mine to love man's way,
But all I have to love in all the world,
Can you find richer heart than age gives me
To save you with? And he, can he love you

Whose love cannot reach high as highest God?
And such a little day makes worlds of change!
My river, calm when age is all in storm,
Lift up your voice and be once more my friend;
And teach me, longing for a life as wide
As widest sea, the quiet peace you find
In shadows here before you go to sea.

III

YOUTH AND AGE

FULBERT. HELOISE.

HELOISE.

HAT is it, Uncle? What a line is here,
So deep my hand can hardly smooth it out!
And, yes, a tear a-tremble on the lash—
There, there, 'tis gone; now look straight up at me—
Why, what a mist conceals these kind, best eyes!
Uncle, I'll kiss each lid, and you must then,
Must tell me what it is, my best of friends!

FULBERT.

My Heloise—I love to call you mine—
No, do not take your arm away; it rests
About my neck in such a splendid curve—
I like it there; it comforts me with peace.
(*He sinks into reverie.*)

HELOISE.

Uncle!

FULBERT.

My years weigh heavy, Heloise.

HELOISE.

And that is all? Who said when years came on
That I should be the staff to feel the way
Into the shadows? You forgetful uncle!

FULBERT.

If I forgot, God's staff should comfort me;
'Twill prove at last, God 's best! When ardent youth
Along the rounded earth with beauty bound
Sets eye, and measures up the starry vault,
All seems complete; the winds are melodies,
The plains are faith, the forests mystery,
And mountains crown themselves with light of years;
Should love come then, the heavens bow, and God
Again seems rich in blessing life. Let age,
The summit of the years attained at last,
Look forth, and yonder stretches vale untravelled,
Some earth foot knows not.

HELOISE.

You are sad for that?
Why you have seen the best of earth: what more?
No place that time has saved but you have seen;
No beauty springing from the dark to light
But you have started at; where richness is
Of men and arms, where glory waits the eye—

FULBERT.

Yes, you are right, I have seen that.

HELOISE.

Perhaps,
Where man has worked his life into some field,
And called it home, but left it by his work
None richer.—

FULBERT.

I have seen that too, but missed
Living it.

HELOISE.

You?

FULBERT.

I never told you this;
Forgive me if for once I dream aloud.
My boy's life passed—how shall I say?—alone;
Long trips afield to gain the shade of trees;
Waiting along the grass to hear the birds
Should they unlock that somewhat earth kept close;
Then wandering to where the river lived,
Finding friend unfailing, nor over old,
And floating on with it, and watching how
It eddied in among the bending reeds,
Smiling in the sun and in the shadows calm;
Above some worthless stones, and scattered shells,
Poor but for a white and sparkle, saying things
I near made out, the whisper was so loud;
And then, for fear I should, to secret depths
Withdrew and all was lost. Forgetful soon,
With manner all resistless forth it came
And lifted wave to break a flower's sleep,
Or brought a little sunshine where with fins
Slow-moving some great bright fish felt secure,
And then a flash, was gone. My wonder was,—
I never fathomed it,—this same strange heart
Should leap and break itself where rocks were wild,
Without return bring whiteness as of snow,
By day such gleams of beauty, and by night
A sound enchanting, yet when sea's voice called—
A laughter in it seemed to me so rich—
Grow still, intense, and cling to something dark
Of field or tree, and then with kind of sob
Go out to meet the wideness of the sea.
What had the fields or trees worth loving so?
The laughing sea came from the sky's own blue,

Could drift its snow, or be as blue as sky,
And, oh, such bounding winds came over it!
But now I know why river made no haste;
Who knows the why of things to-day? But wait—
To-morrow flashes light within the dark.
You look as though this were a dream indeed;
Well, I confess, things cloud somewhat to-day.
You know our favored spot where river stops
And ere it goes to sea is still? Last night
I stood there silent; when I laid my hand,
In the old-time way, close beside its heart,
No beat was wild, and I expected—

HELOISE.

Well?

FULBERT.

For all your life, suppose, a single thing
You wanted, missed it, gaining all things else;
Would you be happy? World would think you so,
And so perhaps you should. I wanted love;
These things I mentioned gave it me; home, more.
But home—because the earth had need of me,
Or I perchance of it, the end was one—
Had slipped away into a memory
Before I learned how good it was in truth.
Much like some hopeful pilgrim seeking shrine
Where East first breaks in day, and, rapt in joys,
Though ways are over rocks, or lost in woods
Whose tangles light is stranger to, is sure
That there, when way is ended, journey done,
Heart's prayer shall rise to depth of sky's vast blue,
Nor mix with winds that wanton over lands
And mock on seas, straight up where God may hear;
So I went forth to seek the shrine of love:
Gayly, when life was young, and hope was strong,

And sunshine's blessing rested on my heart,
And friends waved hands at parting; voices gay
Came floating on the winds as I sped on,
And music, till I passed below the hills;
As way grew strange and long, I made sweet speech,
And words were sweet that dropped as from the blue,
And my thought was of one to hear and know
We twain were wedded from the first of time:
Sadly, when life was old and faith was calm,
And sunset but a moment over hills.
No friends were waving hands, for hands were still;
Nor music; but a prayer that somewhere yet
A face might change in tenderness for me.
Last night where trees make dark that line of hills
A light came forth and brake from out a star
And moved me with the thoughts of other days;
For in a perfect blue that other night
A star was bright and was my guiding star
With wonder all its own when quest began
In those far-off times when my life was new.
Oft I have seen it since, but till last night
Never the same excelling perfect star.
Last night love came.

HELOISE.

You should be happy then.

FULBERT.

No: supremest love is sacred sorrow.
By losing, not by finding, love is crowned.

HELOISE.

I think love knows no want, no loss, no age.

FULBERT.

Youth's view; how can you know love? love is life.

HELOISE.

Know love? Not all, no doubt; who can know all?
But love's goodness—that height the blue stops not,
The whole earth breaking forth in voices sweet—
Know that? I do know that!

FULBERT.

Who taught you love?

HELOISE.

Love has no lessons may be learned as tasks:
It is a gift for aught I know as free
As song birds sing; they waste no years for song;
Some morning day stops a moment near a nest,
Looks in, and what a melody awakes:
God's richness makes love's goodness free as song.

FULBERT.

And you love?

HELOISE.

Abelard.

FULBERT.

How long?

HELOISE.

I think
We twain were wedded from the first of time.

FULBERT.

And he loves you?

HELOISE.

As much as life: nay, more;
His life, he says, through me is made pure soul.

FULBERT.

And you believe this?

HELOISE.

Know; he told me so.

FULBERT.

The love I found last night makes me sad. Yours?

HELOISE.

O makes me glad! as if a splendid sun
Made morning ever in my heart of hearts,
And noon should find me home from over seas!
I wish you too had found a love like that.
Your kindness makes my life surpassing rich;
You have been father, mother, home to me;
I love you for it, love not quite like this,—
Don't close your eyes,—and when I pray each night,
I pray that God, whose peace surpasses joy,
May bless you with his peace.

FULBERT.

That's quite enough.
Go, now. Tell Abelard meet me to-night
At sunset where the river stops awhile
Before it goes to sea.
(*Alone.*) Another star,
I thought would linger, sets. My lone, last star!
One thing remains, that Abelard be true.

IV

HAPPINESS

HELOISE. ABELARD.

HELOISE.

MY Abelard, how rich our meeting here;
I had a troubled dream, and you were lost.

ABELARD.

Soon found again, my soul's delight; not so?
But let us sit, and tell me of this dream.

HELOISE.

I dreamed I learned the miracle of love:
The joy of love's first days we thought so much
Was but the snow wave lifts along its crest,
Light smiles on; the joy of living day by day,
Each other's only, was the endless sea.
No night grew live with stars, but wondered we
If day could match the last; but spendthrift time,
That wastes what centuries have starved to save,
And saves some little thing age never saw,
Brought beauty hidden from the jealous age,
And each day something better than the last,
And taught us how to find its ripe of heart,
To gaze on till the silence there was gone.
The watchful world, which wants of those who have,
Saw light in eye it fathomed not, knew not,
Conceiving thence this must be sin, spoke loud,

And ruffled o'er the dream we drifted on:
We could no longer meet, a gulf between,
But voices passed, and hearts were ever brave;
Then silence came, your voice was gone, your face,
I saw so long, grew faint, as mountain's brow,
When clouds are low and storm is near, grows dim,
Until I could not know it as your own.
The dream changed; you were banished, world was wild;
I said, that man, proud yonder in all your scorn,
I love, let me to him; but hands were rough,
While greater grew the distance, onward you;
One only followed you, some large-eyed youth
Had climbed your holy hill, and there found you.
But how your face held out of gates, eyes flashed,
Nor once looked back on scenes you triumphed in!
Whilst noisy clang and shout were barring way
Flower-strewn not long before for your approach.
The one remained, and you together passed
Where distant hermitage, fields bare, earth poor,
Became a shelter from an open sky.
They came again, those early loves,—like birds
A noise sends on the wing, returning soon,
When noise proves only noise, and food abounds,—
By thousands came, and you stood up to teach,
The same great you, and spoke as one in clouds,
God near with laws and glory for mankind.

ABELARD.

That seems prophetic; I could do just that.
Small men cannot forgive pre-eminence;
I am the first philosopher of the age,
Accordingly men hate, may banish me:
In spite of them I have been, shall be great.
Some day the sun owns heaven, revels there;
The next, gray everywhere; at eventide,

Should the sun come, 'tis cold, no more than light;
On morrow reigns a king. I am that sun.

HELOISE.

Wait. Fame had found you out; the world was kind,
Came, praised, as though the past had never been.
For them a golden way led forth to you,
And I alone was kept from passing there.
The years were long, at last were done, and grave
Held you and me. Fame over, peace at last.
But grave, that never opens door who knocks,
Unsealed and yielded up our whitened bones,
And hostile hands were free to rattle them—

ABELARD.

O Heloise, this is too horrible!
Such dream is not prophetic: world may hate,
But that!—Come, let us think of good to-day.

HELOISE.

Ah, yes, a dream, but it was very real—
To feel Death held us!—There, I've done with it.
What brings you from your books this morning?

ABELARD.

You.

HELOISE.

Most gracious answer; say you, is it true?
Or came a sunbeam over musty page,
Some nameless monk transcribed when hands were numb,
And challenged fancy hunt it to its lair,
And brought you forth of doors?

ABELARD.

Yes, sunbeam came;
I followed, tracked it home, and came to you.

HELOISE.

Seeking sunbeam, chanced on me? Chance is kind,
And yet unkind, for it is only chance.

ABELARD.

A sunbeam lost its way, and came to me,
With woful tale of places strange and dark,
With tears that overflowed such winsome eyes,
So wrought on me that I arose from books,
Left problems men had weighed for centuries,
And promised lead it home, clasped trusting hand,
And over fields we came, and are with you.
What is it worth?

HELOISE.

For half-dried eyes, a kiss;
For you?—would you be satisfied with thing
That rests as lightly on the lips as blue
Upon the sea?

ABELARD.

The sea is black by night,
And gray in storm, but blue for happy sky.
I would be happy.

HELOISE.

Happy? High as soul
Be happy then!

ABELARD.

As lightly as the blue
On open sea, but long as life, a kiss!

HELOISE.

Tell, love, how many thoughts of me last night?

ABELARD.

As many as the stars, more beautiful;
As many as you thought of me. Enough?

HELOISE.

No: you must think more; twice, at least, for once.

ABELARD.

Why twice for once?

HELOISE.

You have books, world, fame, me;
You must give thought to them—my thought is you.
Forth from your study came last night two thoughts;
Were they as rich as someone's soul that came
When all was still? You should have said your heart,
For hearts are hearts,—yours, mine,—was mine last night,
To-day, forever.

ABELARD.

Know you not it is?

HELOISE.

So well! What a beggar I to barter thus
My young life's heart for great and kingly yours!
Me you have richly clad in love's rich purple,
But you, my kingly heart, must be content
With something like a perfect faith in you—

ABELARD.

Who moves among the trees? Why, 'tis Fulbert,
His eyes bent close upon the ground—he turns,
Should he find us here—

HELOISE.

He knows everything,
I told him all last night.

ABELARD.

What were his words?

HELOISE.

They were of love,—his love,—but not like ours;
He said supremest love was sacred sorrow.

ABELARD.

He censured?—

HELOISE.

No. He bids you come to-night
And wait at sunset where the river stops
Before it goes to sea.

ABELARD.

Why there to-night?

HELOISE.

I do not know. He came from there last night.
The moon was all a-wonder, fair and high,
And made such splendor in the earth; I sat,—
You know my window fingers silent now
So richly wrought in colors marvellous,—
There by my window, happy in the light,
When he came forth beneath that arch of trees
We waited by when nightingale was glad.
Slowly he came, then stopped, stood long, looked up,
Then on, straight home, and sent for me.

ABELARD.

(*Aside.*) Strange, strange.

HELOISE.

Oh, he has been so good! I wish he knew,
Not that gray mist of love, but love like ours,
Light everywhere! To-night should he say love,
Teach him as you taught me joy crowns love's height,
And never sorrow. Lonely, kind, true man!
You must go? Will you come to-morrow, love?
And all to-night when moon stops over trees,
So large and wonder in its golden face,
Remember where I sit, and look, and wish.
Remember, love!

L. of C.

V

MERCY

(*Enter* ABELARD, *alone.*)

ABELARD.

THE sun is near to setting, this the place,
But Fulbert—has he heard what Paris talks?
Out on them, idle minds! To hide their sins
They turn a light on someone passing, cry,
And devil does the rest. The holy mob—
At least, once holy, God created them—
Stay, Fulbert comes. The best the hour affords,
My gracious Fulbert. What is your pleasure here?

FULBERT.

No pleasure—pain. I came to speak with you.

ABELARD.

That gives you pain? The meeting was your wish,
Not my election.

FULBERT.

Mistake me not too soon.
It is not time for temper yet. Wait, wait.
Last night I wore a sword to kill you. Start?
To-day I tell you of it, wear no sword,
Though you have yours. I read a story once,
And since have known it word by word; of yore
A king, with goodly treasures, flocks, and fields,
Saw by the way a lamb a poor man loved,
Had cherished in his bosom, was his all;
But when a stranger came he spared his flocks

And took the poor man's lamb. A voice arose,
Saying, Thou art the man—You! Start again?
Right, you should. All the world was yours to take,
Or let alone. You had but beck, men came;
But speak, they bowed; but raise your hand, they knelt,
And worshipped you. In present centuries
No man has reached the height you hold alone,
And in the years to come to height so high
Man cannot climb but he must see of you;
To-day, to-morrow, ever, fame for you.
In the city yonder thousands sing your songs,
Songs costing you no pang of heart, and say,
A voice is heard again within the world.
But we, my Heloise and I, were here
In home of simple love, were happy. You
We heard of, I bade enter in, and why?
To add somewhat to fame already yours?
Or beg of you some richness you could spare?
We were too poor to give, too rich to ask.
You had a gift you sold,—hence was all men's,—
Learning: she needed that, my Heloise!
For Paris you might spread ambrosial board;
We wanted crumb, not begged, and were content.
You know the rest—remains to tell you this,
That when I learned last night that you were false,—
I am too old to know world's niceties,—
False with my Heloise, I vowed a vow
To kill you first, and leave the rest to fate.
But when I found she loved you—you know that—
Love? Why, each foot of ground among my fields
By day and night I've walked on, saying low,
No one might hear, the day now is when love,
And better love than I had sought, is mine.
To be within a maiden's heart is safe;
And hers gave me not your warm love youth knows,
But a kind of care and tenderness age needs,

Which age alone has learned is best of love.
You come, need nothing, are most rich therefore;
You see me look as if at something great,
Stop, look yourself, ignore my need, and add
To something large enough, a little thing
For you means moment's pleasure, means for me
Life. Roses everywhere for you to choose;
A bush I cultured, thorns not over-kind,
And pricking flesh most often, bears one rose
I watch unfold. As watcher for the morn
Lifts thankful eyes above the breaking light,
And blesses back day's goodness, so I blessed,
From whence it came, each faintest blush of rose;
And when its whole day broke along the sky,
And I was bowed in prayer, my first real prayer
That life was good, your careless hand caught rose,
And I am left a bush where it has been.
You young, I old, you rich, I poor in joys,
Yet you must tangle life's sad destiny,
My holy hours mar, knowing they are few,
Will soon be over, never more to come.
There is that compensates: who has must use;
What I have worshipped many years is yours,
Yours evermore—my sacred Heloise!
I meant you death, I leave you life for her;
Fail not.
Yonder you see the setting sun:
Only a gold like fire among the trees;
Over the river, through the oaks, a shore
And sea, and then there lies a golden path
For you to travel on to meet the sun.
Go.—
What, Egbert! Why stirring?

EGBERT.

Abelard
And I, when moon stands there, meet here to-night.

FULBERT.

I catch your drift, he will be here, fear not.
Listen: last night, when moon made day of fields,
And I was moving homeward, there at window,
Looking her soul across these ancient trees,
Sat Heloise. Why? When you cross the fields,
Have met with Abelard, should you look up,
I doubt not, could you see in eyes and face
Love's glory there we are too old to know,
New thoughts would come to you. When moon stands there,
And you and Abelard are face to face,
I think her prayers may rise among the stars,
And she shall think God answers her and keeps,
As in the hollow of his hand, the one
She loves. I heard the river's song last night;
Its burden was of waiting, hasting not,
Of getting all yourself before you sweep
To sea—man's self before he faces God.
Remember, Egbert.

The Voice of the Pine

My song, we wait some future time,
When roses bloom and June is prime,
For men to learn of thee.
I love thee more than when I heard,
Far sweeter than some sweet-voiced bird,
Thy voice first from our long-loved tree
Give answer back to hymning sea.

What matters it for thee and me
None love thee yet nor seem to see
Yon sail and all of white?
Strong was thy word and made me brave
When over sea the drifting wave
Had drifted sail beyond all sight,
And left me with the stars and night.

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